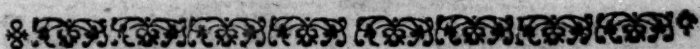


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ON
National Humour.



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A
POLITICAL TREATISE
O N
NATIONAL HUMOUR.

In which the
Character and Conduct of a Statesman

I S
Generally and Impartially Considered.

Addressed to the
Rt. Hon. *WILLIAM PITT*, Esq;

L O N D O N:
Printed for R. WITHEY and J. RYALL;
Book and Printfellers, at *Hogarth's Head*,
opposite *Salisbury-Court, Fleet-street*.

M DCC LVI.

POLITICAL TREATISE

NATIONAL HUMOUR.



Generally and highly considered.

Addressed to the

REVEREND WILLIAM PITT, ESQ.

LONDON:

Printed for R. WILKIN and J. RIVINGTON,
Book and Stationers, in Strand, near
Opposite to the Theatre Royal.

MDCCLXXXV.



A
POLITICAL TREATISE
O N
NATIONAL HUMOUR.



HEN *Lyfimichus*, King of *Thracia*, was about to confer some particular Honours on *Philipides*, a Person whose honest and ingenuous Temper had recommended him to the Royal Esteem: The Monarch desired of him in what Manner he should gratify his Virtue, or what Reward would be sufficient to witness the Love and Friendship he had for him? *Philipides* made this Reply, *With*
What

What your Majesty pleases, provided you do not load me with the Honour of being one of your PRIVY COUNCIL. Which plainly indicates, that his open, easy, and disinterested Nature, did not care to encumber itself with the Burthen of State Affairs, but wou'd rather sacrifice the Honour and Interest of such an exalted Situation, to the more serene and steady Pleasures of his own Mind, in a Station attended with less Intricacy, and more secured from the envious Detractions of a discontented Multitude.

It must appear very conspicuous to every Person of a penetrating Nature, how much the Characters of Persons in these extraordinary Posts of Honour, are exposed to the Calumny of the inferior People, whose Mouths are always ready open'd on every Occasion. Eminence is indeed but a more distinguished Mark for the Arrows of malicious, discontent, and invidious Slander; while the humble Villager, residing in the
Vale

Vale of Peace, slumbers in Security unwounded by the Shaft.

WHEN the Mind, in a serious State of Inaction, reflects on the Dangers and Difficulties which are connected with Dignity and Greatness, one can hardly imagine, that a Person, whom Fortune has secured from the Attacks of Poverty and Want, should exchange a State of Independency, for one so entirely dependant on the fluctuating Humours and Vicissitudes of a murmuring Rabble, whose Expectations are of so sanguine a Nature, that it is impossible the highest Virtue can be adequate to their exorbitant Imaginations; for in a Case where Ignorance, Folly, and Prejudice, are to give in their Judgments of genuine Virtue, good Sense, and Ingenuosity; the Ideas conceiv'd by the former of the Rectitude and Propriety of the latter, will either fall short of the true Extent, or shoot so extravagantly beyond the proper Bounds, that, be it as it will, such exalted Characters very
feldom

feldom come off unhurt, but are sure to suffer one Way or other.

IF we look into the Lives of preceding Patriots, *History* can no where give us a Proof of one Statesman, who preserved the Good-will of a People free and entire to the End ; and though some great Scheme, which might for one Day bias their Opinions to his Praise ; the succeeding Day, perhaps, produced equal Reasons for their Hatred and Dissatisfaction, to him who they just before worshipped as a God : and in a State of Anarchy, the same Statues which were erected in the Morning, to exemplify their foolish Gratitude, and headstrong Zeal for their Patriots, have before Night been defaced and broke to Pieces by the sudden Resentment of those who erected them ; while the distinguished Butts of their alternate Love and Hatred, have been obliged to undergo the Hardships of a necessitated Banishment, involved with all Distresses, Fears and Anxieties, that could possibly

possibly happen to the meanest of human Creatures.

THE good Order and Government of a State depends as much upon the Fidelity and Constancy of the inferior People, as it does upon the Wisdom, Integrity, and Courage of their Representatives and Chiefs, the Welfare of each are so strongly connected, that the least Deviation in One, is productive of reciprocal Ills to the Other; nor is the Dignity of a Sovereign unconcerned in this Point; for wherever there is not a firm Affinity and unshaken Alliance in the Good-will of the People to their Governors, and of both to their Monarch, 'tis impossible that any State can stand long in such unhappy Circumstances; either the Representatives must abandon their Estates and Appurtenances to the Rage of the Faction, or the common People must suffer the Oppressions of those above them, and groan under that Resentment, which should only exert itself to maintain their Rights and Privileges.

IN such a divided State, what a melancholy Situation is that of a supreme Head or Sovereign ; To which Side can he lean ? who first must be appeased, in order to procure his own Ease, and that of his Kingdom ; for surely the Happiness of a King is that of his People : Is the Voice of a single Man so plenipotent, as to hush the general Murmurings of one, or to stifle the Resentments of the other ; for while the People are bawling out for their Rights, in a hoarse Jargon of Clamour and Discontent, the Representatives are asserting their just Resentments to the Prejudices and Suspicions of the Multitude.

WHEN a People silently submit to the avaritious Designs of those, whose Endeavours should be to preserve their Ease and Plenty ; such a Nation may be look'd upon in a State of Bondage, and every single Subject a Slave ; but even a People under these unhappy Circumstances, are better off
than

than a discontented Multitude, who, while they have a plentiful Prospect in View, grow rusty through Inaction, and are either meditating a Riot with one another, or bellowing for open War with a neighbouring Nation.

SUCH a State as this will ever be disordered. For should *Divine Clemency* itself assume the Sovereignty, and make *Integrity* Prime Minister, while the *Virtues* and *Graces* represented the People; *Martial Courage* lead to Battle, and *Justice* hold the Rein of Civil Law; were even such a Change of Government as this brought about, and *Bribery*, *Corruption*, &c. expelled from the Helm of Power; still, if the Minds of the People are not subservient to the Methods used for their Welfare and Security, but will indulge their own weak Opinions, in Opposition to their Superiors, they may as well admit *Tyranny* for their King, and *Oppression* for their Minister, let *Bribery* and *Corruption* creep again into the Cabinet, let

Cowardice be dignified with a Commission of War, and the *Follies* and *Vices* represent the People, who perhaps would be more agreeable and contented under such a Government, than under a better.

THE greatest Establishments, through the Means of a discontented Populace, have fallen to nothing; for when the Multitude have got rid of their Patriots and Senators, their Legislators, Orators, nay even their Emperors and Kings, what have been the fatal Consequences but Ruin and Desolation: Perhaps a sworn Enemy (who could never have gain'd his Point, but by the Separation and Malignity of the People against their Governors) has taken the Advantage of such a Revolt, and involved a whole Nation in abject Slavery and Oppression.

As then it is an Impossibility for a People to exist in any Regularity and Decorum, without a proper Form of Government, it has always been found necessary, that Persons

sons of known Abilities and Fidelity should be elected by the common Voice, to represent their Wants, and settle the Affairs of the People with as much Integrity as they could possible, and with as little Expence: For this Reason the most giddy-headed Rabble would never undertake any Thing, till they had fixed upon proper Persons, whom they have thought more capable of conducting the political or prudential Part of their Design; nor is the most powerful Body in the World capable of performing any Adventure worth Notice, without proper and necessary Restrictions from Persons whose Abilities are to give Command, and first to consult prudently in whar Manner Commands are to be given.

A Sovereign Head, and inferior Governors, Arbitrators, &c. are as necessary to a State, as the *Caput*, or human Head, and extraneous Members, are to the Support of the human Body. A Body Politic should indeed be blest'd with a better Head than a
single

single Individual, or woe to it ; for there are so many corporeal Infirmities in a Nation, that are all deduced by idle Suggestions from the royal Head, and other constituent Members ; that we have great Reason to ask, Who there is, of the most miserable of human Creatures, that would be a King ? but as it is so necessary, that every State should be governed by a supreme Head, the more Goodness and Virtue is requisite in so extraordinary a Point, to enable the Person who takes upon himself so noble and august, so glorious and important a Station.

BUT as the peculiar Genius of a Nation should be the constant Study of its appointed Governors, 'tis necessary that no one Scheme should be put in Execution, without it is connected with the Inclinations, as well as the Interests of a People ; for it is impossible, among so many Opinions, that a regular Judgment can always be form'd of what is for their Good ; but they can easy enough perceive when any Thing is agreeable

able to their Natures and Constitutions ; for which Reason 'tis as essential to consult the one sometimes as the other, but if both can be connected 'tis much better. The People will consequently be more pleased with the Methods of procuring their Welfare, if it is transacted with some Resemblance to their own Notions, and the Governors will be better esteem'd for acting in Compliance with the Humour of the People.

MAXIMS of this Sort should be the main Drift of a Patriot ; for should a Scheme meet with but indifferent Success, yet if it had the favourable Opinion of the Populace, and agreeable to their native Genius, the Consequences of such ill Fortune would be look'd upon rather with Pity than Rage, and ascribed to some occult Causes, which entirely acquit the Projector from popular and national Reflections.

BUT whenever Schemes are projected against the particular Gust or Relish of the
general

general Palate, it is immediately condemned as peremptory, ill-judged, and interested : The Politician immediately becomes the Subject of popular Debate, and is severely treated by those mercenary Scribbers, whose Pens are always ready to blacken the purest Characters, for the Sake of gratifying their own private Ends, by taking the Advantage of the national ill Humour : Notwithstanding the Intention of the Projector was in itself truly great and meritorious, and calculated with no other View than the public Good ; therefore it is not so much the Utility of any Plan that recommends itself to the People, as the lucky Debutt of striking upon the Taste and Humour that is predominant in the Nature of the Soil ; which is indeed a Government more absolute in itself, than any other that can be established.

BUT notwithstanding the probable Methods which might be laid down to exert the true Spirit of Patriotism, to shine with superadded Lustre on the Hearts of the People,

ple, and likewise to preserve a constant effulgence on those Points so capable of refracting their Beams to the Glory of a Nation : It does not in the least diminish the Importance of a Statesman, but rather makes the Character more illustrious, the nearer it arrives to the Summit of Eminence : Nor does it in the least take away from the Dangers and Difficulties which continually wait on so lofty a Station, but rather augments them, and in so much, that while we take only a retrospective View of the surrounding Anxiety, Cares and Perplexities of such a Situation, and value our own Safety at so dear a Rate, as the want of Ambition, and the Imbecility of our Natures confine us to : We are at the same Time astonished and pleased, to see another Being of the same Shape and Composition, aspiring to the highest Pinnacle of Immortality, by assuming a Dignity so extraordinary, and encountering with unsurmountable Hazards, which strike a Terror in every Bosom, but *That* which swells with a noble and godlike Ardour for the Good of its Country.

C

How

How dear then, how valuable is a wise and disinterested Patriot, how extensive the Character ? But how much more, how infinitely and ineffably great would it be, were it founded on the Constancy of divine Nature instead of human : For ah ! whatever Honours are accumulated from the fickle Tongues of a giddy Multitude, are as subject to decay as the Natures that confer them, and are indeed but Pageants of an Hour, in Comparison with the substantial and immortal Glories, which ought to be the indubitable Reward of such exalted and sublime Virtue.

BUT on the contrary, wherever the chief Motive is Interest, in the Person who assumes the Character of a Statesman, we shall find him labouring with illegal Projects to subvert the industrious Part of a Commonwealth, and even disjoining a State to satisfy lucrative Views and Ends, too mercenary to be satisfied ; and after the Accumulation of Million upon Million, finds him-

himself in the same Position he was at first; nor are the hoarded Piles of any other Service to them, than to irritate a secret Longing for more, which must positively be attain'd, notwithstanding the total Ruin of his Country depends upon the Stroke.

How miserably, beyond Expression miserable! is the Prospect that surrounds a Wretch so degenerate, who, after he has sacrificed the Wealth and Liberties of his Country, and can find no Foundation to exercise his sordid Abilities upon, but must stop before he has run half his Career; begins to reflect in what manner he must live out the wretched Remains of Life, and is still growing more miserable, for want of acting in its accustomed Sphere: If Imagination has Strength enough to afford a Transition from a generous Mind to that of a mean and mercenary, attended with all the contemptible Ideas, the cowardly Fears, and just Suspicions of one who is only conscious of the Ills he has occasioned, merely from a pusilani-

mous Regard to his own Safety, let the great Man, to whom this Treatise is addrest, depicture to himself the shocking Situation of such a villainous Character, and from the natural Antipathy of his sublime Generosity, render his own Virtues more striking and illustrious, in Opposition to the detestable Example.

It was the Opinion of the great *Demosthenes*, "That Traitors who make a Sale of their Country, sell themselves first." A Truth that many have experienced, but few could comprehend. For though the Antithesis renders the Intention of the Phrase somewhat dubious, it certainly means no other than that, "He who could sell his Country, was already sold as a Slave to his own Interest : " Nor is there a greater Instance of Slavery, even at the Gallies, than there is in the abject Discontent and insatiate Perturbations of one, whose Bondage results from the Vehemence of his own avaritious Desires.

There

There have been undoubtedly several Persons of real Honesty, who have at first appear'd in the Management of publick Affairs, with Hearts free and unpolluted ; who perhaps never in their Lives had an Opportunity of knowing the Influence of a Bribe : But have found some Time after, the Temptation too strong to be resisted ; and for want of Fortitude have suffer'd their Eyes to be dazzled, their Hands contaminated, and their Hearts corroded by the venomous Efficacy of Gold, so that it were better no Person should be dignified to such a Station, till he had been secretly and artfully try'd in this Case ; and if he could not stand the Test of such a Trial, he should be deemed a Person totally incapable of securing the Public Interest.

As it is highly prejudicial to a People, when a Minister or Statesman sacrifices the Public Interest to his own ; so it is equally injurious to a Nation, when its Wealth and Opulence is drain'd to support unnecessary Schemes

Schemes of Hostility against foreign Powers; for whatever is transacted in this Point commonly fails in the Execution; and a People are laid more open to the Insults of an Enemy, when the chief Protection (which is their Riches) are diminish'd: 'Tis a certain Maxim in Government, that the most necessary Prop of a State is the Wealth of the Subject, without which the most brave and courageous People in the World must inevitably become an easy Conquest to their Foes; nor can there be a greater Encouragement to an Enemy, than the Advantage of national Poverty.

THUS far are the Vices and Follies, the Virtue and Interest of a People connected with the proper Rules of Government in those above them; nor was this little Treatise wrote with any other Design, than the Promotion of a substantial Harmony between the People and their Ministers; and as there is nothing so miserable as a distemper'd State, 'tis humbly hoped, that those,
whose

whose Worth entitles them to such superior Offices, may, for the future, thoroughly consider the Importance of their Stations, and how much their own Dignity is dependant on the general Welfare.

F I N I S.



which would entitle them to such inquiries
 and should, perhaps, be the same, as the
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